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John Doe Reform Bill Passes State Senate

Madison, Wis. – Today, the Wisconsin Senate passed Senate Bill 43, also known as the John Doe Reform Bill, authored by State Senator Tom Tiffany (R-Hazelhurst) of the 12th Senate District. The Assembly version, Assembly Bill 68, authored by Representative David Craig (R-Big Bend) of the 83rd Assembly District, will be taken up on October 21. Senator Tiffany issued the following statement regarding efforts to pass these bills:

“Today, the State of Wisconsin moved one step closer to end secret, unconstitutional, and open-ended investigations using the John Doe process. Citizens deserve transparency and protection of their fundamental rights. This reform accomplishes this while preserving prosecutor’s use of this important investigatory tool.”

The current John Doe statute does not protect the free speech rights of witnesses and targets of a proceeding. Under a John Doe proceeding, the presiding judge and prosecutor are given discretionary powers, without oversight or accountability.

“In light of what was leaked and reported on regarding the John Doe investigations, Senate Bill 43 and Assembly Bill 68 open the process to greater accountability and transparency. It is the Legislature’s job to protect the rights of citizens against abusive prosecutors, and the John Doe Reform Bill works to preserve those rights to the fullest extent.”

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